



Luke 15:11-32 speaks about a father and his two sons.

Here Jesus was using the symbolism in this story to express the mercy of God, as symbolized by the father.

We can also draw lessons from the attitude of both sons towards the Father.

**King James
Version**



From the story, after the younger son asked of his share of the inheritance, in *verse 12* it was clearly stated that the **inheritance was divided between both sons**. This means that both sons had rights over his portion of the inheritance. But the younger son decided to leave the country of his Father into a far country. By leaving the presence of the father, the younger son in this story was demonstrating the fact he **did not want to be under the authority, guide and counsel of the father**. This attitude is considered rebellious and I do think this was the sin he committed. Unlike the younger son, the elder son remained in the presence of the Father, and as he stated in *verse 21*, he was obedient and loyal to the father.

When the younger spent all his inheritance and **repented** of his act, he demonstrated **humility** by his **decision** to go back to his father to **ask** for forgiveness and to **entreat** his mercy. This act also indicated that he **knew** his father to be merciful and compassionate. From the story, as he returned back, the Bible recorded in *verse*

20 of that chapter that the Father saw him when he was far off (*this reminds me of Jesus' statement to Nathaniel in **John 1:48**-when thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee*), this act of the Father showed that he has been in expectation of the son's return and knew for sure the effect of his son's decision to leave his country. But much more than the younger son expected, the father did by restoring him to his full rights and privileges, this is symbolized by the ring, the rope and shoe he received. Also, the father's act of sacrificing the fattest calf shows the father value's his son more than his goods - the inheritance the son demanded.

Also, despite the piousness demonstrated by the eldest son, his response in **verse 25-30** when his brother came back showed he **lacked relevant knowledge of his inheritance** (*his portion of his goods*) and who his father was (*merciful*). He saw his inheritance only as his father's own and not his, but in **verse 12** it was clearly stated that the inheritance was divided between them (*himself and the younger*). He was waiting for the father to give him something that was ready his. The father's response in **verse 31** confirms this observation and served to enlighten the elder son.

In conclusion, Jesus was using this story to describe the nature of God as indicated by the father as one who value's and love's His children despite our imperfections. Though this story was said to the Jewish audience, it is still **applicable** to us Christians now as the nature of God has not and will not change. God is always merciful and compassionate to **receive us back when we truly repent**. And from the elder son's story, we can learn that we have to pursue relevant knowledge of God and know our rights and privileges in Christ, so we can fully access our inheritance in Christ Jesus.

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Daniel Ogbemudia Idehen

